

### *God's purpose for marriage: our happiness or our holiness?*

If you married with the attitude or motive of wanting a better life, being fulfilled, enhancing you well-being, or even being in love, you have bought into the world's scheme of things.

*What? Love is the best, highest, and only true motive for marrying.*

Well, to mimic the words of a former president, "It depends on what your meaning of the word *love* is."

If love means romance and delighting in someone who is fun to be with, exciting, attractive, and makes you feel warm and fuzzy then we, along with others, would say, no, love is not the motive for marrying.

*That's crazy!*

No it's not. Those kinds of motives are self-centered. They are humanistic man-centered motives and are no different than the way the world views marriage.

### ***Humanism is the driving force of many American Christians and churches.***

What is humanistic Christianity? It is humanism dressed up in Christian garb. It is the gospel of self, which is the gospel of the whole world. It is me-centered religion—God exists to make me fulfilled.

Trendy religious approaches to "doing church" are the vogue. They are an easy, comfortable religious construction—a false gospel that panders to and exalts self and one that is embraced by millions of us who call ourselves Christians.

Our approach to marriage is no different. Humanism pervades our attitudes, concepts, and approach to marriage. Regardless of how much we talk of taking up the cross, denying ourselves, and following Jesus, there are a vast number of professing Christians who do exactly the opposite.

As with those who embrace the gospel of self in Christianity, there are many of us who enter marriage with the gospel of self firmly entrenched at the center of our being. We believe marriage is primarily for our enrichment, edification, and well being (as we perceive well-being to be our comfort). Marriage is viewed as the means to that end—the means to



Genesis224 is the marriage ministry of Mike and Jewel Williamson they attend Calvary Chapel SE Portland

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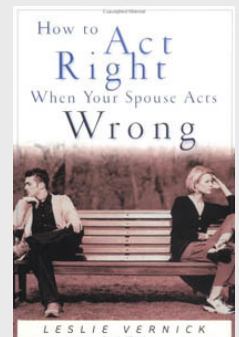
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### Recommended Reading

#### ***How to Act Right When Your Spouse Acts Wrong***

By Leslie Vernick

The title of this book should suffice to deliver the theme without comment. For those of us who can't quite grasp the subtlety of the title, (ha) let me just say that the author has written an easy-to-read, convicting book, on the subject of dying to self and that how marriage is the perfect medium for this to happen.



Jewel and I believe all couples can benefit from this book. In fact, we want to start a marriage class or group using this book as a study guide. It's biblically based with scriptures throughout

If your immediate thought was that your spouse needs to read this book, you are miles away from truth and the whole point of the book. **We urge you to get this book for yourself**—not your spouse.

- ✓ **The Oct-Nov *Love and Respect* class is full. Watch for notices of future classes.**
- ✓ **Read an online excerpt from my forthcoming bestseller entitled "Bake at 350". Click below**

<http://genesis224.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/bake-at-350.pdf>

### ***God's purpose cont.***

complete us, to make us whole, to make us fulfilled, to make us happy, to provide our felt needs and desires.

And that, by the way, is precisely why so many Christians are divorcing in numbers equal to the world. There is little or no difference.

Jewel and I are convinced that God's purpose for marriage has much more to do with making us holy than to making us happy. There is no better instrument to affect dying to self than marriage. And yet many of us are looking for the way of escape—a back door out of this once-wonderful relationship turned sour, boring, or unfulfilling.

It is only sour because of our preconceived ideas of what marriage should be about—namely, our happiness. When our ideals of happiness, self-interest, and self-fulfillment go unmet, we conclude that we made a mistake and married the wrong person. Perhaps we even think we married Jekyll and Hyde.

Well, to be fair, some of us did marry Jekyll and Hyde. But we believe that, on the whole, many of us *are* Jekyll and Hyde. We like to place the blame on our spouse, but often the trouble is ourselves.

Again, marriage is a perfect instrument to die to self—actually it is a cross—an instrument of death.

Did you think it was about long romantic walks together on a picturesque beach? Sadly many Christian ministries and books portray marriage just that way. For what that's worth, you might as well have been married at the Las Vegas Chapel of Love by an Elvis impersonator.

Having said all this, God's brand of marriage is not torture, and God's instrument of dying to self is not an instrument of torture. Quite the opposite. If you are tortured in your marriage, it's because either of you or both of you are not on the cross.

Quick takes

***Only beggars  
go to heaven!***

## ***Masks***

Have you ever treated your spouse unkindly on Saturday night or Sunday morning and then come to church and worshiped God? Have you harbored resentment and bitterness toward your spouse while at the same time lifting your voice to God in worship?

We come to church. We put on our Jesus smile, hug the greeters and when asked the “how ya doing” question, we give the obligatory “fine, good, or blessed” reply. Yet some of us are torn up inside. Some of us might even be on the verge of giving up on God, church, . . . our marriage.

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All of this is aided by what is called “doing church”. It's a routine that is far removed from healthy family life and body life.

Pastor Doug gave me a great message on CD called “True Faced”. I don't know how many of you have heard it, but it's a message I highly recommend. In a nutshell it's about how we wear masks—mainly out of fear of rejection. It's also about taking off the masks and the freedom that comes from doing so.

It's not hypocritical to be a Christian and have struggles with sin and struggles in our relationships, but it might be hypocritical to pretend we don't when we do. Then again, telling your stuff to anyone and everyone is not a wise thing to do either. There are those in the church—the pastors and others—who, knowing their own weaknesses and struggles, are available to walk with you in humility and in a non-condemning yet accountable way.

We come to “church” to be together in the presence of God. If church isn't a safe place to be who you are, then other than alone in your prayer time with God, where is that safe place?

Confession, forgiveness, repentance, encouragement, healing, restoration, edification, strengthening—these are some of the things, along with worship and teaching, that happen in a healthy body of believers. And this is going on within our body. But I suspect there are those who out of fear, stubbornness, or pride hamper their growth in Christ by wearing a mask.

Shall we get real bold and daring and take off the masks?

Ask Pastor Doug for more info about the CD. Again, it's called “True Faced” and it's by John Lynch. It's also available for free download at

<http://truefaced.com/media/mp3-download>